

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, September 16, 2013, for the purpose of meeting to discuss the Sustainability Plan Framework.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Emmett V. Jordan, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Luisa Robles, Recycling Coordinator and David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: John Lippert and Michael Hartman, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability (Green ACES); Laura Kressler, Public Safety Advisory Committee, Bob Snyder, Bill Orleans and others.

Mayor Davis observed a moment of silence for the victims at the Washington Navy Yard. Mayor Davis thanked Green ACES for their efforts and stated this had been a monumental task over several years. She noted that the report seemed very center city oriented.

Ms. Robles and Mr. Lippert gave a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Lippert referenced the Maryland Sustainable Certified Green Team and noted that Green ACES had a similar vision.

Mayor Davis asked if the Maryland Sustainable Certified goals were incorporated into this document. Ms. Robles said no, but there was significant overlap.

Mr. Lippert stressed the value of setting overarching goals. He recognized that there were challenges as well as some areas that the City didn't control.

There was discussion of zero waste. Mr. Lippert stressed this was a term of art and a goal, but acknowledged that the City was unlikely to get to zero.

Mr. Hartman noted the statement on environmental justice that was included in the framework.

Ms. Mach reported on a session she attended at University of Maryland and suggested that members of the arts community needed to be included in the proposed committee to create a municipal sustainability plan.

Council reviewed the draft framework document. Mayor Davis asked about conducting an energy audit. Mr. McLaughlin responded this could be done in a future year as part of the energy efficiency work program.

Mr. Roberts suggested the installation of automatic light sensors in City buildings. Mr. Putens reported that FDA had successfully used these in their buildings.

Mr. Putens stated that many homes in Greenbelt East were using Energy Star appliances and some had installed solar panels. Mr. Jordan stated that many homeowners had taken advantage of energy audits. Ms. Pope noted a tax credit she had received for appliance upgrades.

Mayor Davis asked what a green sanctuary was. Mr. Lippert responded that it was a program for religious establishments/communities that make their buildings and/or congregations more sustainable.

It was noted that Greenbriar also had community gardens. Ms. Mach suggested encouraging folks to eat whole foods and organic foods, rather than prepared/factory foods. Mr. Jordan noted that the schools were doing more to promote healthy foods. Mr. Roberts favored requiring organic gardening at City garden sites. Ms. Pope noted the value of the Farmers Market.

Mr. Putens referenced the efforts by Greenbrook Estates and Greenbrook Village to plant trees and restore areas that had been cleared when the communities were developed.

There was discussion of a stream restoration project at Greenbriar Park performed by a local developer to fulfill development requirements. Mr. Roberts expressed his opposition to this plan.

Mr. Roberts expressed concern about City staff spraying pesticides and cited an example that he had previously reported that wasn't necessary and violated City policy. Mr. McLaughlin responded that this had been applied to deal with poison ivy around July 4.

Mayor Davis noted that a representative of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments was labeling the City's tree canopy at 52%. Mr. McLaughlin responded that the canopy was 62%.

There was discussion of biking to/from the Greenbelt Metro Station. It was noted that the cost to rent bike lockers had increased. There was discussion of the bike parking/storage area at the College Park Metro station parking garage.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested that Council adopt the framework. Then it could be sent to advisory groups and City departments with direction to incorporate it into their work programs. He also indicated staff would set up a process to track accomplishments and set goals under this framework.

Bill Orleans stated that he looked forward to more discussion of this document. He suggested Council expand the Greenbelt Connection service. He also suggested the City raise expansion of The Bus service with the County Executive at the upcoming work session with him.

Information Items

Ms. Mach reported on a meeting at University of Maryland regarding the creation of a Sustainability Institute there. Mr. Jordan expressed concern about connectivity between the Greenbelt Station and the Purple Line. Ms. Mach suggested the City support the Purple Line even if there is a “no comment” position.

The meeting ended at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager*